

# Augusta University

## Policy Library

### Continuity of Operations Plan

**Policy Manager: Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response**

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Emergency and continuity of operations planning is a core responsibility of all Augusta University schools, departments, units and its separate campuses. Augusta University has established a framework to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against the effects of a wide range of incidents and emergencies that includes continuity of operations planning. The occurrence or imminent threat of a disaster or emergency has the potential for causing widespread or severe damage as well as injury or loss of life or property.

Whether resulting from natural, technological, or human causes, these incidents can severely disrupt Augusta University operations and mission essential functions. This policy addresses the development of a University-wide Continuity of Operations Plan (“COOP”) including standards for emergency and continuity of operations planning have been established to:

- Safeguard the welfare of faculty, staff, students, patients, and visitors.
- Protect Augusta University property before, during, and after a disaster or emergency.
- Preserve Augusta University’s mission of teaching, research, patient care, and public service.

Units should understand that COOPs are support tools to be utilized when a disruption of operations is experienced. Units should also understand that in a COOP Event, real time decisions may need to be made by executive authorities regarding the implementation of restoration efforts.

#### **AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS**

*Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:*

- Alumni     Faculty     Graduate Students     Health Professional Students  
 Staff     Undergraduate Students     Vendors/Contractors     Visitors  
 Other:    Government Entities or First Responders

#### **DEFINITIONS**

These definitions apply to these terms as they are used in this policy:

**Continuity of Operations:** an effort within individual departments and units to ensure the continued performance of essential functions in preparation for, during, and after emergencies. This is accomplished through the development of plans, comprehensive procedures, and provisions for alternate facilities, personnel, resources, interoperable communications, and vital records or databases.

**COOP Event:** any planned or unplanned event which can shut down an organization or disrupt normal operations. COOP Events may include emergencies such as fire, hazmat incident, flooding, tornado, communications failure, radiological incident, civil disturbance, hurricane or tropical storm, explosion,

---

**Office of Legal Affairs Use Only**

**Executive Sponsor: EVP, Finance & Admin/CBO**

**Next Review: 3/2030**

“sick-building” syndrome, terrorist activity, and others. COOP Events may include planned events like scheduled long-term maintenance.

**Critical Functions:** Functions that must continue or rapidly resume after a disruption of normal activities. For purposes of this Policy critical functions are functions needed to resume mission critical activities in the areas of academics, research, student services, clinical care, and administrative services.

**Essential Personnel:** individuals responsible for maintaining Augusta University’s critical functions during a disruption to normal operations as determined by the individual unit.

**Support Services:** critical functions that are not directly academic, research, or clinical focused, but are crucial for maintaining basic operations during a disruption. This includes but is not limited to IT support, facilities management, public safety, food services, transportation, patient services and communication systems, ensuring faculty, staff, and students can continue necessary activities even during or in the immediate aftermath of a COOP Event.

**After Action Improvement Plan:** to analyze the management or response to a COOP Event by identifying strengths to be maintained and built upon, as well as identifying potential areas of improvement.

## PROCESS & PROCEDURES

The Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response (CEPAR) is responsible for the oversight of the Continuity of Operations Planning Program for Augusta University. CEPAR provides expertise and oversight for the develop and maintenance of Augusta University’s COOP and creates a centralized location for documentation of all campus-wide department COOPs, training, and exercises. CEPAR can be contacted at [cepar@augusta.edu](mailto:cepar@augusta.edu). The primary location of such documentation should be in the respective units.

### A. Continuity Plans

Each unit that is determined by Augusta University to provide critical functions shall develop and maintain a COOP. This plan should reflect sufficient forethought and detail to ensure a high probability of restoration of critical functions following an incident. All units will identify and protect their critical processes, operations documents, and functions that are necessary to Augusta University’s daily operations through a COOP. Each unit will provide a reasonable amount of time and resources towards developing their unit COOP, with oversight and direction given from CEPAR. Each unit shall submit an annual COOP through the current planning tool between August 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> each year. To accomplish this task:

- a. Each unit requiring a COOP shall designate an individual to serve as their continuity program manager.
- b. Plans shall adhere to the format provided by CEPAR.

- c. Plans shall be updated annually and submitted to CEPAR for review.

## **B. Continuity Plan Activation**

Upon experiencing a COOP Event, a unit leader should refer to its most recent COOP to begin restoration efforts in coordination with CEPAR. If there is cause to deviate from the COOP, units will inform and collaborate with CEPAR as soon as possible. Units should document restoration efforts to aid in the After-Action Improvement Plan discussed below and continue improvement of the COOP process. Nothing in this Policy is intended to conflict with the Inclement Weather and Other Emergencies Policy pertaining to the President's authority to close the campus or portions thereof.

## **C. Post Event Evaluation**

After a COOP activation event, Augusta University will conduct an After-Action Improvement Plan. After Action Improvement Plans are intended to be used as a tool by Augusta University. After Action Improvement Plans provide analysis for lessons learned, best practices and recommendations for future planning, training, and COOP development. As improvement actions are identified and addressed, it is important that any relevant COOP plans, policies and procedures are updated accordingly.

## **REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

Intentionally left blank.

## **RELATED POLICIES**

[Emergency Waiver of Policies](#)

[Inclement Weather and Other Emergencies](#)

## **APPROVED BY:**

Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 3/5/2025

President, Augusta University

Date: 3/10/2025